

**Maryland State Department of Education  
Program Approval and Assessment Branch  
Division of Certification and Accreditation**

**Request for Proposals:  
Developing Maryland Approved Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

~~September 27, 2005~~

~~October 6, 2005~~

December 12, 2005

**IMPORTANT NEWS:**

- On November 4, 2005, the *Guidelines for Implementing Approved Alternative Preparation Programs* were revised following the Maryland State Board of Education (MSBE) and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) decision to require that the internship last from 4 to 8 weeks. Please review the guidelines in light of this substantive change.
- On December 1, 2005, PSTEB followed the MSBE in approving changes to COMAR 13A.12.01.07, the Resident Teacher Certificate regulation. This reflects a change in grade point average (GPA) required for entry into an alternative certification program from 3.0 in the area of concentration to the mean of program entry requirements for Maryland IHE departments of teacher education. Currently, this GPA is 2.7.

**1. Q: Eligible Program Providers.** Could a Multi-partnership Provider be comprised of one LEA and two or more IHEs?

**A:** YES. See page 3 of the RFP for the full set of “Eligible Program Providers.”

**2. Q: Program Approval Status.** Will LEAs sponsoring state-approved alternative teacher preparation programs have Maryland Approved Program status?

**A:** YES.

**3. Q: Program Approval Status.** In a state-approved partnership or multi-partnership program, who will have Maryland Approved Program status?

**A:** The partnership.

- 4. Q: Reading Course Requirements.** (1) If a proposed program is in elementary education or early childhood education, do the reading courses need to have already received state approval for meeting the Scientifically Based Reading Research (SBRR) Reading First requirements? (2) Can MSDE credit-bearing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) reading courses be used? **12/12/05**

**A:** (1) YES.

(2) YES, but it is important to note that after January, 2006 CPD courses will only reflect reading course revisions that meet SBRR requirements. (“Old” CPD-numbered courses do not reflect these requirements and will not be useable after that date.)

- 5. Q: Existing Courses.** Can we teach any of our existing performance-based courses?

**A:** YES. However, successful applications will demonstrate how proposed programs are designed to meet candidates’ learning needs, and how flexibility is built in to support candidates’ needs while they are in their internships and their residencies.

- 6. Q: Differences Between Current and Proposed Resident Teacher Certificate Regulations.** For these proposals, what will MSDE recognize as the minimum number of clock hours necessary to begin a residency, 135 or 90?

**A:** Regulations have been approved. The recognized number is 90. **(12/12/05)**

- 7. Q: The Internship.** Do the weeks of the internship have to be in the same place, e.g., same state?

**A:** NO.

- 8. Q: The Internship.** Do the weeks of the internship have to be continuous?

**A:** NO.

- 9. Q: The Internship.** It is really hard to figure this out for career changers. What guidance can you offer?

**A:** While strongly encouraging applicants to seek innovative solutions, we offer the following points:

- The “pre-employment training,” i.e., the 90-clock hours (minimum) of preparation prior to the residency, may occur simultaneously with the internship.
- The internship does not have to be planned as exclusively full time teaching. Rather, programs may provide internships that begin with observations, or other field-based experiences, and may include meetings with mentors and/or teachers, principals, and/or other school personnel. Participation in after-school, evening, and weekend school activities may also be included in the internship.
- Consistent with the flexibility statements in the *Guidelines for Implementing Approved Alternative Preparation Programs*, programs may give consideration to prior experiences that might equate with a portion of the required internship, thereby reducing the number of weeks for individuals.
- You may contact Michelle Dunkle at [mdunkle@msde.state.md.us](mailto:mdunkle@msde.state.md.us) if you want to seek MSDE feedback on internship plans you are considering. Substantive guidance from MSDE will lead to “Question and Answer Updates” that will be posted on the MSDE website.

**10. Q: Troops To Teachers.** What can you tell us about service members’ separation from the military?

**A:** A service member may have up to 60 days of full pay and benefits during a “terminal leave” period up to their separation date. Pay ends after separation. (12/12/05)

**11. Q: Troops To Teachers and School High-Poverty Status.** Do the applications have to say that candidates will teach in LEAs or schools that the U.S. Department of Education has identified as “high poverty?”

**A:** NO.

**12. Q: “Residency” and “Employment.”** What is the relationship between these two terms in the context of alternative preparation programs using the Resident Teacher Certificate?

**A:** In this context, the terms mean the same: A teacher who teaches on the Resident Teacher Certificate is an employee of a Maryland LEA.

**13. Q: Approved Alternative Program Accountability.** Has MSDE developed a program approval accountability process yet?

**A:** As stated in the RFP (pages 14-15), approved alternative preparation programs will submit annual program reports to MSDE, but MSDE has not yet developed a more extensive review cycle for these new program types.

MSDE will work with the State Teacher Education Council (STEC) to develop program approval procedures to ensure program quality over time. (12/12/05)

**14. Q: Four-Year Institutional Accountability.** Given that all 4-year IHEs are on a regular MSDE or MSDE/NCATE review cycle, how will delivering alternative preparation programs using the Resident Teacher Certificate affect program approval status?

**A:** Delivering alternative programs should strengthen an institution's position at the time of review. As stated in the *Guidelines for Implementing Approved Alternative Preparation Programs*, "MSDE review teams should look for evidence that program options at IHEs provide 'late decider' pathways to certification, as recommended in the *Redesign of Teacher Education*, that may use the RTC component."

**15. Q: Four-Year Institutional Accountability.** NCATE accredited institutions and those seeking NCATE accreditation are required to receive approval of teacher education programs through the Specialty Professional Association (SPA) process.

- (1) Will MSDE help us meet these requirements if we deliver alternative programs following the new state guidelines?
- (2) Given that these partnership programs are "alternative preparation" with high entrance and internship standards already set by the state, will MSDE **require** SPA reporting? (12/12/05)
- (3) Do institutions report those completing an alternative preparation program as program completers? (12/12/05)

**A:** (1) YES. New programs will be performance-based, so in time candidate performance will meet national as well as state review requirements. In the short term, MSDE will recommend that institutions allow themselves a 3-5 year reporting "grace" period while the new alternative programs are being piloted. (12/12/05)

(2) MSDE is examining this issue but does not see that institutions must include RTC teachers in SPA reports. Institutions do not recommend these individuals for certification. Instead, superintendents request RTC certificates. For HEA/Title II purposes, MSDE reports the pass rates of teachers working on the RTC, as required by the federal regulations. When teachers move from this certificate to the Standard Professional Certificate, they do so because they have met the SPC I requirements while working on the RTC.

(3) NO, MSDE will report these individuals to the federal government. See Q&A 2-3.

**16. Q: Proposal Format.** Should proposals be submitted to MSDE in the order given in the RFP section on page 21 called "Application Checklist?"

**A:** YES. Keep in mind that reviewers must be able to read each section easily. They will be looking for the extent to which the sections meet the RFP requirements.

**17. Q: Special Education.** Will MSDE consider proposals for alternative preparation programs in Special Education? **12/12/05**

**A:** YES; however, they should be consistent with the model of the current pilot Special Education Resident Teacher Certification programs in the state; these are dual programs providing eligibility for non-special education AND special education certification.

**18. Q: Placements.** Will the internship and residency placements have to be in high need schools only? **12/12/05**

**A:** NO.

**19. Q: Content and Pedagogy.** Is MSDE interested only in content preparation? **12/12/05**

**A:** NO. Programs must ensure both content background, as a “gate,” and pedagogical knowledge and skill. They must ensure that candidates are developing the ability to teach content.

**20. Q: Deadline for Changing Existing RTC Programs.** When will existing RTC programs have to be revised to meet the new guidelines? **12/12/05**

**A:** January 2007, but any *new* program proposed to MSDE before this date must follow the guidelines.

**21. Q: MSTA’s Involvement.** Has MSTA been involved? **12/12/05**

**A:** YES. Both the MSBE and the PSTEB have been involved individually as separate boards and jointly through the Joint Conference Committee, whose deliberations led to the development of the *Guidelines for Implementing Approved Alternative Preparation Programs*. PSTEB is comprised of representatives of numerous organizations, including the Maryland State Teachers Association and the Baltimore Teachers Union. Both boards adopted the guidelines. Additionally, MSTA was represented on the *Teacher Requirements Study Group*, which was formed at the direction of the MSBE to explore issues directly related to the development of both the *Guidelines for Implementing Approved Alternative Preparation Programs* and the amended Resident Teacher Certificate regulation.

**22. Q: Troops To Teachers Participants.** Does MSDE have an expectation of how many Troops To Teachers service men and women will become participants? **12/12/05**

**A:** NO.

**23. Q: Higher Education Act – Title II – Teacher Quality.** Who is responsible for reporting on alternative preparation program participants who are working on the Resident Teacher Certificate? **12/12/05**

**A:** MSDE.

**24. Q. Other Policy Changes.** Are there other changes to RTC policy that could affect program development? **(12/12/05)**

**A.** YES. Program developers should make use of Revised Resident Teacher Certification Policy Recommendations that make significant changes to entry requirements for potential RTC candidates.

**25. Q. Eligibility for grant writers.** Can an IHE be the lead agency in a proposal? **(12/12/05)**

**A.** YES. The partnership must include a LEA, but an IHE may be the lead agency.

**26. Q. What is MSDE's view of online coursework in alternative preparation programs?**  
**(12/12/05)**

**A.** MSDE strongly encourages applicants to provide coursework online. TTT personnel and their spouses, as well as other career changers, all over the world are looking for teacher education programs and courses and need online access. A highly valued proposal component will be online coursework.